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DD/A 76-0785

18 February 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Medical Services

Charlie:

1. Consider the attached as informal and off the record.
2. As I told you, I sent to Personnel for informal reaction that grade structure would like to have in his reorganized branch. The attached represents the results of that exercise.
3. I suggest you bring it with you when we have our next scheduled seance and we can discuss the matter.

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/s/ John F. Blake

John F. Blake
Deputy Director
for
Administration

Att

Distribution:

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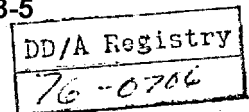
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6 FEB 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : PSS Proposed Grade Structure

REFERENCE : Memo for D/Pers from DD/A dtd 13 Jan 76

1. The grade structure as outlined in the proposal from the Chief of Psychological Services Staff (PSS) is somewhat difficult to assess because it is couched in general terms concerning ideals and goals rather than specific duties and functions to justify the grades. Therefore, our comments on the grade structure are based on assumptions concerning position duties projected from our understanding of PSS functions as of the last PMCD survey (1974).

2. In brief, we see no merit in fragmenting PSS by establishing a small "Organizational Consulting Branch" as proposed. With regard to the proposed grade structure, our evaluations do not support the GS-15 or the two GS-14 position grades in the Assessment and Counseling Branch, nor the GS-15 position grade in the Organizational Consulting Branch. Otherwise, we find no great problem with the proposed position grades.

3. The following listing of the PSS proposed structure reflects those grades which are not supported by PMCD:

ASSESSMENT AND COUNSELING BRANCH

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SPECIFIC PMCD COMMENTS

ASSESSMENT AND COUNSELING BRANCH

PMCD can support the proposed grade structure for the Assessment and Counseling Branch with the exception of the GS-15 Branch Chief position and the two GS-14 positions. The Branch Chief's position is currently allocated at the GS-15 level based on the added credit of functioning as the Deputy Chief of the Staff. Since this would no longer be true in the proposed package, the GS-15 as well as the two GS-14 position grades could be justified only if significant duties involving the application of new areas in psychology or psychological research have been added since our last review. In general, however, we would expect to find at least one of the following requisites in Psychologist positions above the GS-13 level: (a) the incumbent is considered to be an authority in a defined specialty area; (b) the incumbent is working on new areas in psychology to a substantial degree; (c) the incumbent has supervisory or managerial responsibilities involving other professional level employees.

Counseling in the past has been a very limited activity in PSS. Most of the counseling has been done by the assessment Psychologists who give a minimal amount of counseling during feedback sessions concerning test evaluations. Departures from this norm involve some counseling of retirees on possible post-Agency employment based on standard aptitude tests and the conduct of a joint OTR/PSS/OP course on counseling. Neither of these specialized counseling functions nor the more usual assessment feedback type of counseling require more than journeyman GS-13 level skills.

The assessment and testing activity is the nuts-and-bolts psychological function provided by PSS. It requires an understanding of the Agency and its requirements and the assessment and evaluation skills expected of any Psychologist at the GS-11 to GS-12 level. The additional credit given for understanding and adapting Agency requirements to the routine assessment function justify an allocation no greater than GS-13. In cases where the assessments are particularly standardized, such as in the DDO GS-07 to GS-08 clerical/professional break point, the proper allocation is only GS-11 level in recognition of the lesser skills required.

The Testing activity included in this Branch is a basic psychology function justifying allocation of Psychometrist positions at the GS-07 level with GS-09 level supervision. The GS-07 secretarial position for this Branch is justified, even

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though it is outside the pattern, because of specialized functions performed in the position related to psychological testing.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTING BRANCH

We believe that this element should be combined with the Research Branch. The application of psychological techniques and research in the specialty area of organizational psychology would justify the allocation of Psychologist positions at the GS-14 and GS-13 level as requested in the proposal. However, PMCD would be unable to support the allocation of a Branch Chief position at the GS-15 level for this small element which is not only an extension of the front office of PSS but is also to be headed by the C/PSS and given clerical support by his secretary.

Psychological Services has become increasingly involved in Organizational Psychology in recent years. However, their consulting in this area relates closely to the efforts of officers in the Research Branch who are involved heavily in human factors and in building complex statistical analysis capabilities which can be used to analyze attitude surveys and pinpoint problem areas. It was this interrelationship that prompted PMCD to recommend in its previous survey of OMS the restructuring of PSS into two Branches - one for Testing & Assessment and one for Research & Consulting.

RESEARCH BRANCH

The Research Branch in PSS deals basically with psychological research in the areas of human factors, sophisticated computer analysis capability, and the development of new psychological tests or new applications of old tests. The responsibilities and level of involvement in these areas of psychological research are sufficient to justify allocations at the GS-14 level, as well as the supportive functions at the GS-11 and GS-09 level. Allocation of the Branch Chief position at the GS-15 level is justified both by the level of work performed and the supervisory and managerial responsibilities required.

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FUNCTIONAL PLACEMENT OF PSS

At the time of our last OMS survey a PMCD proposal relating to the functional placement of PSS was edited from the final report and deferred for discussion at a later date. The major areas of emphasis in the current PSS request would indicate that the basis for PMCD's previous proposal, as restated below, remain valid today:

"A fundamental point disclosed during the survey of Psychological Services Staff is its lack of interchange with or relationship to other OMS functions. The primary interchange with OMS elements appears to be the Staff Chief's participation in OMS staff meetings along with some minimal communications with the Psychiatric Staff. PSS responsibilities and areas of involvement include testing, assessment, special studies concerning attitude surveys, Management Assessment Centers, selection, occupational and employee profiles, job design and human factors, and various special psychological projects concerning new test applications, visual data impact, smokers clinics, and the development of computer programs for psychological statistical data manipulation. In all of these areas, only one function is related to other OMS activities - the production of personality profiles. Although personality profiles are normally done by the Psychiatric Staff, they are occasionally done by PSS on request, because they are interesting and challenging projects and are within the abilities of some of the Psychologists. The lack of interchange and relationship with other OMS elements and the continuing concern with personnel-related functions raises an obvious organizational question of the propriety and effectiveness of its location within the Office of Medical Services.

An examination of the functions and activities of PSS shows that the majority of its work is related to personnel functions. There is an obvious connection between the efforts of PSS in the area of assessment, selection, profiles, attitude surveys, and job design and the Office of Personnel's efforts in the area of assessment, selection, evaluation standards, employee counseling and interview programs, and position management. The survey also disclosed little interchange and communication between Office of Personnel components and PSS in these areas of mutual concern."

PMCD therefore recommended that "OMS Management explore, with the Office of Personnel, the desirability and feasibility of transferring the Psychological Services Staff from OMS to OP. Such a transfer should have little, if any, impact on the functioning of the rest of OMS and should result in a significant improvement in the level of services rendered by both PSS and OP through their mutual assistance and interchange of information."

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